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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : Amembassy STOCKHOLM

1086
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

June 12, 1961
DATE

REF : Embassy Despatch 1017, March 14, 1956

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	EUR-5	INR RM/R-2, INR-7, H/PR-1, L-2, IO-4
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SUBJECT: Communication to Secretary of State from Former High Officials of Estonian and Latvian Republics.

On his initiative, Dr. August REI, Chairman of the Estonian National Council, which has its headquarters in Stockholm, requested an appointment with me, indicating that he would like to be accompanied by Mr. Felix CIELENS, who had held a number of high posts in the Latvian Republic. Following the practice set by my predecessors in receiving leaders of Baltic exile groups in Sweden, I granted an appointment to Messrs. Rei and Cielens, who called on me on June 7.

After the usual courtesies, in which Dr. Rei welcomed me to Stockholm, he produced a letter to the Secretary signed by him and Mr. Cielens, to which was attached a memorandum containing certain proposals with respect to the future of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Dr. Rei thereupon read the operative parts of the memorandum, which proposed in essence that the three major Western Powers urge the United Nations to adopt a resolution calling on the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from the Baltic countries, and calling for the holding of a plebiscite in those countries, with their subsequent neutralization being reinforced by guarantees of sovereignty and territorial integrity by the United States, Great Britain, France, 'Germany' and the Soviet Union.

Dr. Rei and Mr. Cielens then made some further comments to the effect that while they recognized that the proposal was "inapplicable" at present, it was their hope that at some time in the near future it might prove appropriate for the United States to make such a proposal to the United Nations, and thus perhaps remove the problem of the status of the Baltic nations from the "blind alley" in which it had been for so long.

In responding, I noted that the letter to the Secretary had been signed by Dr. Rei in his capacity as a former holder of the highest offices in the Estonian Government, and by Mr. Cielens as a former occupant of important posts in the Latvian Government. I then said that I wished to be quite frank with them in making clear that in my official capacity as the United States Ambassador accredited to the Government of Sweden, there were of course certain formal procedural requirements which naturally had to be observed, and that in normal circumstances any communication of this nature to the United States Government should be delivered through the accredited Estonian and Latvian representatives in the United States, and not through me, unless the Department specifically instructed me to the contrary. I added that, provided that fact was fully understood and

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appreciated, I would, however, be agreeable to bringing the substance of the communication to the attention of the interested specialists in the Department of State, on the understanding that it was to be regarded as a privileged communication and that no publicity would be given to Dr. Rei's and Mr. Cielens's having called on me or to the fact that they had left the letter and memorandum with me. Dr. Rei and Mr. Cielens indicated full agreement, stating that if it became known that the proposal had originated in Estonian emigré circles it would "ruin" it at the outset, and adding that they fully understood my position and would not seek to use this occasion as a precedent for the delivery of further communications to the Secretary or to the Department by way of the Embassy.

In conclusion, I made clear to the visitors that the United States Government, having never recognized the Soviet conquest of the Baltic Republics, looked with sympathy on refugee aspirations with respect to the Baltic States, but that I was sure that they understood my position in the present instance, to which they again replied affirmatively.

While in the circumstances I made no commitment to forward the letter and enclosure to the Department, but merely to bring its substance to the attention of the interested specialists, I am enclosing herewith the originals of both documents for such action as the Department may desire. If queried at a later date by Dr. Rei, I propose, in the absence of other instructions from the Department, simply to state that as I agreed I brought the substance of the communication to the attention of interested officials in the Department.

The Embassy's Despatch under reference reports a previous occasion, in 1958, on which Dr. Rei requested that a communication from him be forwarded to the Secretary of State.

J. Graham Parsons

J. Graham Parsons

Enclosures:

1) Letter of May 31, 1961, to the Secretary, signed by Dr. Rei and Mr. Cielens.
2) Memorandum enclosed therewith.

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Stockholm, May . 1961

His Excellency
the Honorable Dean Rusk
Secretary of State of the
United States of America
Washington.

Sir:

In the very near future the US government may possibly see itself compelled to discuss with the Soviet Government certain problems of international politics, which require a solution in the interests of securing peace in the world. In this connection we venture to draw the attention of your Excellency to the fact that the legacy of unsolved problems, left open by World War II, includes the Baltic question which sooner or later will have to come up for discussion and decision. We hereby take the liberty of submitting to you our views on this problem and its possible solution, as outlined in the enclosed memorandum.

As advocates of the Estonian and Latvian national interests, we request you to consider the suggestions contained in our memorandum. It is our sincere hope that you and the American Government will find it possible to take steps towards the implementation of our proposals. In our opinion, such a course of action would not only be in keeping with the lofty principles of international justice, but would also be practical diplomacy whose aim it is to secure peace in Europe and in the entire world.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of our highest consideration.

Enclosure.

August Rei

Former President, Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Former Estonian Envoy in Moscow

Vadmalsvägen 25, Stockholm-Bromma, Sweden

Felix Cielens

Former Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Latvian Parliament, Former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Envoy in Paris and Madrid

Tegelbruksvägen 25/27, Hägersten, Stockholm, Sweden

M E M O R A N D U M

In August 1939, betraying the cause of peace, the Soviet Union gave the signal for Hitler's aggression against Poland and, by the same token, to launching World War II. As his part of the bargain, Stalin obtained a free hand for an action against the Baltic States, and as a result, in 1940, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were occupied by Soviet troops and annexed by the Soviet Union.

When Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, it became an ally of Great Britain and, later, of the United States. At that time the Kremlin repeatedly tried to obtain from Roosevelt and Churchill a sanctioning of the Soviet action against the Baltic countries. Churchill feared that Stalin might withdraw from the alliance and make separate peace with Germany and gave in to the Soviet demands and Great Britain de facto recognized the annexation of the Baltic States. The United States, on the other hand, strictly adhered to the principle of national self-determination as reaffirmed in the Atlantic Charter and continues to recognize the independence of the Baltic countries.

The Baltic problem is thus a question at issue between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The Baltic problem is a problem of international justice and national self-determination. It is also a major problem in the European political pattern.

By a "Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia", issued on Nov. 15, 1917, by the Soviet-Russian Government, the right to dispose of their own fate, even to the point of separation from Russia and setting up independent states, was accorded to all nationalities of Russia. Use was made of this right by the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian peoples who had belonged to the Russian Empire for less than two centuries - Estonia and Latvia, moreover, as autonomous units, with their own laws and local administration. Instead of abiding by the declaration of Nov. 15th, 1917, and, accordingly, paying consideration to the proclaimed independence of the three Baltic nations, Soviet Russia, without even taking the trouble to declare war on them, started an aggression - in order "to occupy

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and thereby break down the dividing wall which is an obstacle to the Russian revolution, as it separates Soviet Russia from revolutionary Germany", as the official organ of the highest authority of the Russian Soviet Republic, "Izvestija", wrote on December 25th, 1918. However, all the three nations succeeded in upholding their national liberty and political independence in the war which followed, until at last the Soviet Government deemed it appropriate to stop hostilities and conclude peace with them. In the peace treaties Russia "unreservedly recognized the independence" of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and "voluntarily and forever renounced all rights of sovereignty formerly held by Russia" over the three peoples and their territories. Moreover, by treaties of non-aggression, concluded by the Soviet Union with the three States in 1932, the signatories mutually undertook "to refrain from aggression and acts of violence in any form and to resort exclusively to peaceful means for the solution of any disputes and conflicts likely to arise between them." These treaties were to remain in force until the end of the year 1945.

Cynically breaking the obligations assumed through these treaties and annexing the three States, the Soviet Empire moved to positions of great political and strategic importance in the general European system.

Possession of the Estonian islands and of Liepāja (Libau) and Ventspils (Windau), the two Latvian ice-free ports, permitted the Soviet Union to move its Baltic fleet from the Finnish Gulf to the open central part of the Baltic Sea. As a result, the Soviet Union has acquired a high degree of strategic control of the Baltic waters. The Kremlin would have much the same control even if it did not - as it does today - hold northern East Prussia and exercise virtual military domination over Poland and the East Zone of Germany.

The control of the Baltic area and the Baltic waters gives Russia additional possibilities to bring pressure to bear on Finland and make Finnish independence largely illusory. This control also constitutes a permanent threat to Poland, whatever its regime. It will be recalled that one of the political consequences of Russia's conquest of Estonia and Livonia (the northern part of Latvia) in 1721

after the Great Nordic War was a growing Russian pressure against Poland, which eventually led to the dismemberment of the Polish Kingdom.

Russian control of the Baltic Sea also implies a permanent threat to the security of Germany and of the three Scandinavian countries. A logical consequence of the Russian domination in the Baltic are Soviet aspirations to safeguard naval access to the North Sea by obtaining control of the Sound, Kattegat and the Kiel Canal.

The strategic importance of the Baltic Sea is hardly reduced by such means of modern warfare as the airforce and long-range missiles. Combined with naval forces, these weapons tend to increase the significance of naval bases. It is common knowledge that the Russians have built in Latvia and Estonia air and rocket bases which have definite far-reaching offensive tasks.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that control of the Baltic Sea enables the Soviet Empire largely to dominate Northern and Central Europe and, accordingly, Continental Europe as a whole.

The above serves to show that the Baltic problem is an important part of the European political pattern and that the independence of the Baltic States is essential for safeguarding peace and collective security in Europe.

A Soviet domination in Continental Europe can hardly be tolerated by Germany, Great Britain and France, America's principal allies, and by the United States itself, as these powers have assumed the main burden in securing peace and freedom on the eastern coast of the Atlantic and in all of Europe.

What could the NATO powers do to achieve a Russian withdrawal from the Baltic Sea and the Baltic States through joint political effort and concerted diplomacy? The Western Powers can obviously not order the Soviet Union to withdraw from the Baltic area. Hence some compromise, giving due consideration to Soviet interests in the Baltic area and to the prestige of the Soviet empire, would be a way out of the existing blind alley. Believing that such a way can be discovered, but without pretending to have devised the most suitable and practicable one, we venture to submit

to the consideration of Your Excellency a plan which in our opinion deserves to be examined - at least as a starting-point. Under this plan the United States, Great Britain and France should urge the United Nations to adopt a resolution

a) calling on the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops and officials from the Baltic countries and suspend there the functioning of Soviet administrative and other agencies and institutions;

b) calling for the establishment of a provisional administrative system that would function pending a plebiscite and

c) calling for a plebiscite on the question whether the Baltic nations desire to sanction the incorporation of their countries into the Soviet Union or wish to return to the democratic form of government and national independence which they enjoyed after World War I. The plebiscite should be carried out under the protection of troops designated by the United Nations (e.g. Swedish units) and under the supervision of the United Nations. The right to vote should be reserved to persons who were citizens of the Baltic countries in 1939 and to their descendants, irrespective of their current residence and citizenship.

After having regained their freedom, the three Baltic States Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - should form a union or confederation - according to the decision of the three peoples. This union or confederation would be internationally neutralized - on the pattern of the Republic of Austria - and its sovereignty and territorial integrity guaranteed by the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, and the Soviet Union.

It goes without saying that no foreign country should be given the right to establish military bases of any kind in the territory of the neutralized Baltic Union and that the Union would not have the right to store or keep nuclear weapons in its territory.

Stockholm, April 1961